

Five Core Questions you must ask of each program.

1. What was the Police Academy Program created to do in the first place?
2. What is the program doing now?
3. Should it be doing what it's doing now?
4. If not, what should it be doing?
5. How should it do what it should be doing?

1. What was the Police Academy Program created to do in the first place?

The Police Academy is a five month, 28 college credit hour, program that meets the New Mexico legislative requirements for police officer training in New Mexico. The Police Academy is certified as a "satellite/regional academy" by the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy (NMLEA) and operates under the rules, regulations, and authority of the NMLEA as prescribed under NMSA 1978 Section 29-7-1 to 29-7-13 and NMAC 10.29.1 to 10.29.18.

History of Program

The police academy program (initially entitled Police Science) began operation in 1974-75. The university catalogs from that period indicate that initially a one year certificate program was the only offering. It was not until the 1976-77 catalog that the current three part program (academy, associate, and baccalaureate degrees) appears.

Initially the entire program was a part of the Social Sciences Department. In 1988, the four year program was transferred to the Business Administration Department and the discipline name was changed to Administration of Justice. The Academy and the two year program joined the Dept. of Applied Technology in 1992. The discipline name was returned to "Criminal Justice" in 2001. The Police Academy was transferred to the Business Department the following year.

Pursuant to an advisory board recommendation, the Academy program was shortened from the nine month, Fall and Spring semester curriculum that it had retained since its creation to a five month (Spring plus Summer I) curriculum. Finally, the current Department of Criminal Justice and Chemical Dependency was created in January of 2007 to house all of the criminal justice programs plus the chemical dependency program.

There are two options for an A.S. degree. The first option is for students who have completed the Police Academy Program. This option allows these students to apply the credit hours earned in the Academy program towards their A.S. degree.

Today, there are a total of nine certified satellite academies in New Mexico. Each satellite academy is established under the authority and approval of the NMLEA and must adhere to all regulations for training and licensing of police officers and telecommunicators.

In the last twenty years the NMLEA has rejected several applications to establish new satellite academy programs in New Mexico.

Geography and Student Base

It is important to note the geographic location of the other satellite academies and briefly describe their applicant base so as to understand the uniqueness of the program here at Western NM University.

Three academies are located in northern New Mexico. **One** is located in **Farmington** and comes under the oversight of a board of director made up of a coalition of law enforcement agencies located in San Juan County. **Two** are in **Santa Fe** (NM State Police Academy and the NMLEA Academy).

Two are in **Albuquerque** (Bernalillo County Sheriff's and Albuquerque Police Department).

Two are in **Las Cruces** (Las Cruces City and Dona Ana County Sheriff's).

One is located in **Hobbs** and is a part of the Criminal Justice Program of the New Mexico Junior College. New Mexico Junior College offers their basic academy certificate similar to WNMU's and credits earned may be applied to Associate of Arts, and Associate of Applied Science degrees.

This makes **WNMU's police academy** program the only one affiliated with a four year college program and geographically the best option for the central and western part of the state.

Student Base

Another important factor to note is the nature of the students attending each academy. In order to better understand this it is best to begin with a description of the student base of the listed academies.

The NM Law Enforcement Academy (Santa Fe) is established by statute and is funded to provide the basic academy training for **free** to all law enforcement agencies in the NM, including room/meals. **Self-sponsored students** (those not employed by a law enforcement agency) must pay for tuition and room/meals, generally all the students attending this academy are sponsored and already employed by NM law enforcement agencies.

Each of the following academies was created to serve the needs of the agency and while each is technically authorized to train students from outside agencies, they generally do not serve self-sponsored students:

- The NM State Police Academy focus is on training only future NM State Police Officer.
- The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Academy focus is on training only future Bernalillo County Sheriff's Deputies.
- The Albuquerque Police Department focus is on training only future Albuquerque Police Department officers.
- The Las Cruces Police academy focus is on training only future Las Cruces City police officers.

- The Dona Ana County Sheriff’s academy focus is on training only future Dona Ana Sheriff’s deputies.

The San Juan County Criminal Justice Authority (Farmington) and Southeastern NM Law Enforcement Academy (Hobbs) were established to serve multi-agencies in their region, and generally do not serve self-sponsored students.

It is interesting to note that until a few years ago the NM Junior College in Hobbs was receiving an annual appropriation (\$50,000) from the State of New Mexico legislature for their program, which was used to off-set the costs of academy attendance for the students and agencies.

Western NM Police academy was established to serve the law enforcement needs of the region, but is unique from the other academies in that the focus here is on serving self-sponsored students in our associate and baccalaureate programs, as well as independent students from throughout the state, in acquiring the certification to become eligible for employment as a law enforcement officer in New Mexico

Educational Goals and Objectives of the Program

1. students acquire a core of knowledge about the structure and functioning of the job of law enforcement officer along with basic skill proficiencies;
2. students independently and collaboratively analyze, interpret, and evaluate the requirements for achieving licensing and certification; and
3. students prepare for professional roles in the law enforcement profession that will enable them to successfully compete for entry level positions.

Students by year since 1993.

Year	Class #	Total	Year	Class #	Total
1993	38	30	2005	50	19
1994	39	46	2006	51	14
1995	40	38	2007	52	9
1996	41	33	2008	53	10
1997	42	18	2009	54	12
1998	43	12	2010	55	26
1999	44	12	2011	56	19
2000	45	10	2012	57	10
2001	46	9	2013	58	15
2002	47	11	2014	59	13
2003	48	12	2015	60	18
2004	49	12	2016	61	12

2. What is the program doing now?

Over the years the Police Academy has seen the state licensing requirements grow from a minimum of 400 hours of required training to a minimum of 676 hours. Currently, the Police Academy continues to be a five month, 924 hour program (28 college credit hour), that meets the legislative requirements for police officer training and certification in New Mexico.

3. Should it be doing what it's doing now? If not, what should it be doing?

The objectives of the police academy are consistent with university mission, vision, and core values, especially to “...*provide our students with the tools essential to build their futures and succeed in life as productive educated citizens.*”

The police academy was established “to assist the profession of law enforcement by providing quality candidates for employment and thereby assisting agencies to become more efficient and effective in their role of administering criminal justice, maintaining order, and controlling crime in society.” The police academy program provides students with a solid foundation in basic law enforcement knowledge and skills.

The police academy program consists of rigorous and extensive training courses in an adult-learning climate that teaches both the ethics and skills of democratic policing. While it has become more accepted that all police officers with arrest powers should begin their career with a broad and advanced education in the sciences and humanities, the opportunity to do this is not always available or achievable. Being affiliated with the university's criminal justice program adds value to WNMU's police academy program enabling collaboration within the criminal justice program and with other related disciplines to achieve better educated and trained police officers.

The police academy program should continue to function as a valued asset of the university and community.

5. How should it do what it should be doing?

In looking at the future improvement and growth of the program it is important to consider that the operation of the police academy program is impacted by several factors which directly affect its future development and improvement.

First, the NMLEA Board establishes the basic training curriculum. Changes to the curriculum have been made by the Board several times over the years and recent changes that occurred in 2016. This affects the hours of instruction and adjunct faculty necessary to teach the program.

Secondly, admission to the program includes student standards (citizenship, criminal history, medical, psychological, drug testing, etc) established by NM state statute and have an impact on a student's eligibility to enter the program and their, certification, and licensing.

Finally, current facilities, and resources, limit the development and growth of the program. A class size above 15 students has an impact on the logistics and eventual quality of the program. A class size of twenty would probably be the maximum that could safely be conducted.

The ability to expand our class size is obviously linked to our facilities and resources, and as well to the future needs of the state and the potential market for self-sponsored students. Future growth must look at alternative funding sources, similar to what NM Junior College was receiving, to support capital expansion and an increasing operational resources before we look at marketing what I believe is the best academy program in the state.

It should be noted that due in large part to the oil and gas industry in the region, the NM Junior College has been able to expand and dedicate classroom, gym space and even a dormitory for the exclusive use of the academy. They have renovated their agility course, and firearms range and provide state-of-the-art classroom and equipment and tools.